UNEXPLORED PAPUA.¹

IN an interesting book on his experiences as a magistrate in the western division of Papua, Mr. Wilfred Beaver has given a vivid description of life in a practically unknown portion of that little-known land.

The western division is the largest in the territory, and has only partly been brought under Government control. It comprises the basins of the Fly River and the rivers east and west, from the Dutch boundary to the north-western portion of the Gulf of Papua. The people on the coast about Kiwai Island appear as a black, frizzy-haired race of medium height, narrow-headed, with the arched and prominent nose called Semitic. Inland skins are lighter, and noses shorter and straighter, while towards the east there are still other variations, but nowhere in this division is there any trace of the mixed people whom Seligman has described as Papuo-Melanesians.

After short sketches of Papua in general and of the western division and its history in particular, the author takes each river system or its hinterland in turn, as forming the most convenient means of describing the natives and the districts themselves.

In Kiwai the native houses are communal, varying from 250 ft. to 450 ft. in length. The whole roof is supported on the side posts, and, being carried forward over the end of the flooring, forms a verandah. The interior is divided into family compartments, each with its own fireplace. These compartments are open in the Fly River houses, and closed in those further east. All are now giving place to smaller houses, where married men sleep with their families.

Inland from the Fly River and at the western end of the division the bush people differ from those on the coast. The excessive use of *gamada* (*Piper methysticum*), the kava of Polynesia, has had to be prohibited by a Government regulation. In all this region the population is decadent, in the bush through pulmonary disease, on the coast through raids of tribes from the west.

The eastern part of the division on the coast and inland from the Papuan Gulf has scarcely yet been brought under control. Mr. Beaver gives an account of a pacificatory visit and the genesis of a Government station at Goaribari, where the Rev. James Chalmers and his party were killed in 1901. Cannibalism in this district was common, the stronger tribes gradually eating up the weaker. Yet these people are among the best physically in the possession, and, being

quick, intelligent, and imitative, are now becoming employed in increasing numbers by white planters. The whole country being a region of swamps and morasses, the natives are naturally expert canoe-makers, and sago, both here and in the Fly basin, is the staple vegetable food, with bananas and yams when the soil is suitable.

Both at Kiwai and Mawata the natives are becoming "civilised," civilisation consisting in the wearing of European clothes, the use of European tools, and the laying out of the village in two streets of pile houses, each occupied by two families. "There is a flagstaff and a small court-house, a wooden church, and a trader's store." Amusing instances are given of the mingling of old and new ideas. Women make proposals, and brothers and sisters are exchanged in marriage, while the court for native affairs deals with affilia-

FIG. 1.—Bamu River archer in full fighting dress. The gauntlet is worn on the left arm to protect it from the bowstring. The bamboo beheading knife is carried slung around the neck. The head-carrier is carried over the left shoulder. From "Unexplored New Guinea."

tion orders and fines of thirty shillings for "philandering" with other men's wives.

It is impossible to give an adequate view of these interesting chapters within the limits of a short notice. Mingled with descriptions of scenery and personal sketches of prominent natives are interesting accounts of native arts, fishing by means of the sucker fish, and the spearing of dugong from platforms on the reef. Dress or the lack of it, pigs and cassowaries, swamps and gardens, sorcerers' magic and charms, births, marriages, and deaths, are all dealt with in a most unconventional way. A chapter on property and inheritance and Dr. Landtman's account of the religious beliefs of the Kiwai people conclude the book.

The spirit in which Mr. Beaver wrote this most picturesque book is shown when he says: "There is a mystery about Papua that seems to enhance its

¹ "Unexplored New Guinea: A Record of the Travels, Adventures, and Experiences of a Resident Magistrate amongst the Head-hunting Savages and Cannibals of the Unexplored Interior of New Guinea." By Wilfred N. Beaver. With an Introduction by Dr. A. C. Haddon. Pp 320. (London: Seeley, Service, and Co., Ltd., 1920.) Price 25s. net.

fascination. What that fascination is, and why there should be any at all, is hard to say. . . . Papua is a land of disappointment, a land where nothing happens as you anticipate, where the unexpected usually happens, and the impossible is achieved."

An introductory sketch by Dr. Haddon gives a short biography of the author, who was killed

ALPINE PLANTS FOR ROCK-GARDENS.¹

PROCLAMATIONS of purpose are often confessions of failure to achieve it," is the opening sentence of the Introduction of Mr. Farrer's book. His volume is "vast," and from the nature of the subject justly so. Mr. Farrer has not only given an account of the rock-garden plants which now figure in the nursery-men's catalogues, but has also unearthed from botanical treatises a large number which no doubt will some day come into cultivation, so that his book is of more than present-day value. In addition to this, he has been at great pains to discover the correct names of the plants he records, which has entailed considerable research into botanical literature, and for this valuable labour he is deserving of high praise. He also gives some useful information as to rock-garden construction, and throughout the volumes there are good practical instructions as to the cultivation of the various plants.

But Mr. Farrer has unfortunately failed to sink either his own individuality or idiosyncrasies in the volumes before us, so that instead of presenting us with a lucid and useful account of rock plants suitable for English gardens easy to be understood, he has expressed his own ideas and opinions with an exuberance of persiflage that is very irritating. In his Introduction of eighty-four pages and throughout the book the author seems far more interested in striving to commit extravagant excesses with the English language than in conveying useful information about Alpine plants, and in consequence many of the really valuable portions of the book tend to be overlooked. With regard to his descriptions of the plants, moreover, we cannot say that his work is very helpful. After his diatribes on the wearisome jargon of botanists one does not feel that the following description of *Dianthus arenarius* is either

very intelligible or informing: "Related to *D. squarrosus*, is much laxer in the habit with fewer flower stems, taller and frailer and larger, with very fringing whirligigs of white or pale pink." Nor is this seven-and-a-

FIG. 2.—Babiri man from near Dutch boundary. From 'Unexplored New Guinea.'

at Polygon Wood, in France, in September, 1917. His death deprived ethnology of a keen and intelligent observer, and the Papuan Government of a most zealous and successful magistrate, loved by his fellow-officers, and trusted by the natives, whom he understood and with whom he sympathised.

SIDNEY H. RAY.

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¹ "The English Rock-Garden." By Reginald Farrer. Vol. i., pp. lxiv+504+52 plates: Vol. ii., pp. viii+524+50 plates. (London and Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack, Ltd., 1919.) Price 3*l.* 3*s.* net two vols.